

THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.

NO. XIX.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1839.

MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY:—G. F. HANDEL.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN FOR THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.]

[Continued from page 276.]

THE year 1729, although it did not altogether terminate Handel's dramatic career, was nevertheless of decisive influence on his future destiny. He got into a dispute with the singer Senesino, whom he had brought from Dresden, whom his genius had raised, and who is now only remembered as having been connected with him, and on account of this dispute, and because his silly face is found in Hawkins's history;—also, with Faustina Cuzzoni, who is said to have been as beautiful as an angel, but as ill-humored as the devil. They began to feel their importance, to be elated by public applause, and to oppose Handel. It was Faustina, whom, when she would not sing an air of Handel's, he, bodily as well as spiritually a gigantic and powerful man, lifted up, swearing he would throw her out of the window, if she did not obey him. She sang, but peace was not restored; and it must be allowed that Handel's own pride and inflexibility prevented it. He demanded Senesino's dismissal;—the nobility were in favor of the singer;—Handel would not yield, and the Royal Academy was dissolved. Handel continued his

operas in the Haymarket theatre, after hurrying to Italy to engage new singers. But the nobility had established a new opera by subscription, in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields; with Porpora as composer, and the famous Farinelli as first singer. Handel maintained himself for four years against this opposition, with great pecuniary sacrifices, and without the applause due to his talents; but at last he was obliged to vacate the Haymarket, which was immediately taken by his opponents, while he was compelled to take the second theatre. Hasse was now brought forward, in opposition to him; Hasse, whom the Italians called, with more justice than Handel, *il caro Sassone*, for he had entirely given himself up to their favorite manner in his music. His cantilenas, flowing gently and smoothly as a rivulet, easily retained in memory from their generality and uniformity, were suited to every singer, and admitted the introduction of each singer's favorite embellishments and passages; which gave them a much greater popularity than Handel's more characteristic, and often deeper music. Handel had despised this shallow and superficial manner, from his childhood; he had conquered it for twenty-five years, by his more powerful strains; and he could not descend to it now. His friends, who had formerly endeavored to persuade him to yield to the singer, now for his own sake wished him to follow a little more in the footsteps of the new composer; but they did not know the character of a true artist.

On the theatre, however, Handel succumbed with the loss of his property, to Farinelli, his composers, and the wealth of the nobility. He was conquered by his inferiors, nay, by rivals unworthy of him; and yet his fall must be acknowledged to have been a just and necessary fate. For he had *only* the advantage of a higher individual talent;—his genius was enlightened by *no higher idea* of the opera than they had. His operas, like all the Italian operas of his time, are a series of Recitativos and Airs, with now and then a few Choruses interspersed; and still more rarely some stiff Duettos, without truth, consequence or necessity, in action or character. The Recitativos, (at that time generally made by those, who *copied* the music), are with few exceptions, indifferent skeletons, leading, unnoticed by the audience, to the next air;—the airs themselves, numerous to excess, and in each opera, repeating their eternal contents of love tortures, tenderness, and jealousy, are almost every where without intrinsic necessity, and dependent in fact upon the protection of able and famous singers. Handel elevated himself

only occasionally high above his cotemporaries; in the whole, he conformed in fact to that form of the opera, of which the power of the singer's performance was the centre and object. He contended against principles, which, though he was not conscious of it, were his own, when he attempted to get along without the hearty coöperation of the singers; his opponents and the public held on to this principle, which his own works helped to confirm; not from their greater consistency, but because they did not know the higher power which *he* felt within him. To conquer in this contest was destined to another in another country, thirty-four years after Handel's last drama,—to Gluck, in France. If it be true, that Handel said of Gluck, who came to England in 1745, "that fellow understands as much of counterpoint as my cook," the turn of the scales, in which the success of the two dramatists was weighed, becomes still more remarkable. It was in vain, therefore, that in 1737, the enterprise of his opponents fell of itself, and their fountains of invention and interest were dried up; in vain, that, through the influence of Lord Middlesex, favorable prospects opened for Handel, who was only required to give a good word to his offenders. He would not do it, but left the theatre for ever, to enter on that career, which was destined to offer to him the highest palm of glory,—the *Oratorio*.

The oratorios took the place of the operas in Italy during lent, when no operas were allowed. France had already produced *Esther* and *Athalia*, by Racine and Lully; and in Rome, in 1600, a sacred drama, *L'anima ed il corpo*, by Emilio del Cavaliere, had been produced on the stage. Handel himself had already, in 1720, brought out his oratorio of *Esther*, which had been performed in 1732, for ten nights in succession. In the summer of 1733, he produced, on occasion of a solemn anniversary at Oxford, the oratorio of *Athalia*; in 1736, *Alexander's Feast*; in 1738—1740, *Israel in Egypt*, *L'Allegro ed il Penseroso*, and *Saul*. Between the parts he played organ concertos, or extemporized on that instrument; on which he also accompanied his oratorios, in a free, rich, and hitherto (at least in England) unheard of style. His success was by no means correspondent to his name and ability: he had often but a small audience. When, on the 12th April, 1741,* he brought out

* "This is an error; and the contrary is proved by the original score, in Handel's own hand-writing, in his majesty's library, which we have examined. The composer (according to his usual custom) has dated it at the beginning, the 22d

his *Messiah*, it found, in the prejudiced and partial metropolis, so little interest, that at the second performance he had an empty house. The king and Lord Chesterfield are said to have formed the whole audience. Handel, nothing daunted, said, "Very well, it will sound the better!" But his purse was drained, and he had to resort to other means. He went over to the light-hearted, buoyant people of Ireland. He repeated the *Messiah* in Dublin, for the benefit of the prisoners; and it was received with warm admiration and applause. He stayed there more than eight months, with the same good success; and then returned to London, where he produced *Samson*, on the 12th of October, 1742; and afterwards seventeen other oratorios and cantatas; among which were *Semele*, on the 4th of July, 1743; *Judas Maccabæus*, on the 11th of August, 1746; *Joshua*, on the 18th of August, 1747; and his last oratorio, *Jephtha*, on the 20th of August, 1751. The Royal collection of his works, in eighty-two volumes, folio, contains twenty-three oratorios, among which more than one was written within three or four weeks. He however sometimes took a melody from his operas, even in his *Messiah*; or some favorite strain from former oratorios; for instance, the dead march in *Saul* and *Samson*. Of all his oratorios, none contributed so much to confirm his authority in London, as that *Messiah*, which at first nobody would hear. He performed it annually for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital, which was but poorly funded; thus gaining for it considerable sums, and what was of more importance, greater and lasting interest in the nation, and becoming, in fact, the protector of one of the most benevolent national institutions. He continued the performance of his oratorios, with uninterrupted applause, and with a fame which no cotemporary, nay, up to the time of Joseph Haydn (1798), no successor enjoyed. His last concert was given on the 6th of April, 1759; and on the 14th of the same month, he died. He rests in Westminster Abbey, among the great of the nation: his grave is honored by a magnificent marble monument.* In 1784, 1785, and many of the succeeding years, his memory was celebrated by magnificent performances of

of August, 1741; and he has noted at the end, that it was finished on the 12th, and performed on the 14th, of September, 1741." [*Hogarth's Musical History*.]

* "Over the place of his interment there is a monument by Roubilliac, consisting of his figure, in an erect posture, and holding a scroll, inscribed with the words, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' and the notes to which these words are set in the *Messiah*." [*Hogarth's Musical History*.]

his works, assisted by five to six hundred musicians, and before an audience of thousands.

It is a touching circumstance, that he, too, like Sebastian Bach, was deprived of his eye-sight; but for a longer time. He lost it in 1751, by a cataract, notwithstanding repeated and very painful operations. He dictated his last Oratorio, *Jephtha*, to Smith, his assistant at the performances. His iron constitution received the first shock in 1735, when he saw his operas fall a second time before Farinelli and the new composers: an apoplectic stroke touched his right arm: he is said to have been, even for hours, absent of mind; and only recovered, by a resolute application of bathing at Aix la Chapelle. After 1743, he appears to have often suffered from rheumatic complaints,—a natural consequence of his exertions and excitements. Only his powers of mind, and his gigantic energy in his performances, remained the same. His voice was strong, his utterance rough and decisive, and both really terrific, when he called out for the Chorus at the conclusion of the *Airs*. When he directed, he paid no regard to persons. The prince and princess of Wales often saw him get angry and scold them, when they came too late to the rehearsals; and when the ladies of the court talked, he swore at them, and called them by name. The princess would then say, "Hush! hush! Handel is angry!"

(To be continued.)

REVIEW.

The London and Westminster Review. April—July, 1839.
Article III. *The Pianoforte.*

[Continued from page 265.]

We continue our notice of the article on the Pianoforte, in the above Review; but in this number we shall do little more than make quotations on the life, genius, and music of Beethoven. Our readers will recollect, that our former article spoke of an account of his life, entitled "*Biographische Notizen*," &c., from which the Review quotes freely. For example:—

"The following instance occurred very soon after his being appointed fellow organist with Neefe:—

"In this new position" (says Dr. Wegeler) "Beethoven first gave to the orchestra an accidental proof of his talents in the following manner. In the Catholic church the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah are sung on three days in the Holy Week. These compositions consist, as every one knows, of short verses, which are chanted with a certain rhythm; the vocal part consists of four notes following each other, as for instance E D E F, on the third of which several words, or a whole phrase, are sung, till at the close a few notes bring back the singer to the cadence of the common chord. As the organ is not allowed to play on these three days, the performer is only supported by a slight pianoforte accompaniment. Upon one occasion, when it fell to our Beethoven to play this accompaniment, he asked that very correct singer, Heller, whether he would allow himself to be thrown out if Beethoven could do it. The rash consent of the singer was no sooner obtained, than Beethoven threw him so completely out by variations of the accompaniment, although with his *little finger* he struck the note which Heller was to hold all the time, that the latter lost the note so that he could not hit the proper cadence. Old Ries used to relate how astonished Lucchesi, the then Kapelmeister, was by Beethoven's playing. In the first burst of Heller's wrath he complained to the Elector, and though the occurrence pleased that young and clever prince, he ordered a simpler accompaniment in future."—(pp. 14—15.)

"This was but the herald of a greater feat told us (p. 36), concerning the concerto in C major. At its first rehearsal, to accommodate himself with the pitch of the wind instruments, which was half a note higher than that of the pianoforte, Beethoven actually played this long and complicated work in C sharp!

"But the stubbornness implied in these anecdotes, which might have only qualified its owner to compose in one strain—as it were, for the miners in Fridolin's foundery, and not for the lady, or the knight, or the page,—was tempered in Beethoven by that wonderful facility and power of adaptation by which genius, saved from doggedness and self-occupation, is qualified for its loftiest and most excursive flights."

"It is to be remarked, that if nothing could be much more unworldly and retired than Beethoven's life; nothing, also, could be more carefully, almost sullenly withheld from the market where patronage and fashion resort, than his executive talent. He would sit down among the Breunings and extemporize fantasias suitable to the characters of the company, unconsciously shadowing forth, as it were, that turn of invention which should make him one day select 'Napoleon' as the idea of that symphony which is now called the 'Eroica';—but he never loved to exhibit in public; and was incor-

rect, and uncertain as a player. But, for this, his mind wrought all the more incessantly, and a spirit of self-concentration was nourished to an unusual strength, in addition to the force of will, and the variety of fancy with which nature had gifted him so largely. And he had not long entered upon the career of invention—not long detached himself from those indulgent friends, whose constant society must have tended to soften and to humanize, when he was doomed to be driven yet deeper into the recesses of his own mind, by the most terrible calamity which could befall him. That deafness, which finally compelled him to a total seclusion from the world, began to manifest itself in the year 1800; and there are few more painful chapters in the history of genius than those, still to be added, which will contain the early letters on the subject addressed by Beethoven to Dr. Wegeler;—few more melancholy anecdotes than the one told by Ries, how the latter first became aware of his master's impaired hearing, by calling upon him, when they were walking together in the country, to listen to a shepherd's pipe; being no longer able to hear which, Beethoven stalked homeward by the side of his scholar, gloomy, and saying nothing. The legend of the prisoner shut up in the iron chamber, day by day narrowing around him, but reflects what the feelings of the musician must have been: for *his* fate approached, though no less steadily, more slowly. At first, in his letters to Wegeler, who is a physician, we find him writing of his malady as a secret to be kept with jealous care;—then, in a sudden moment of anguish, exclaiming that self-destruction, his only cure, was forbidden him by divine laws. Nor was his condition ameliorated by his domestic relations. His brothers, in whose case he showed a forbearance as extraordinary as was his violence and suspicion in other instances, were worthless and rapacious. They would snatch from his table his compositions when half completed, and dispose of them without his consent to the highest bidder, careless of promises and engagements; and Ries gives us an illustrative anecdote of the master and his brother Caspar, having actually fought in the street about the three pianoforte sonatas, op. 31, (the second, one of the most superb pieces of dramatic composition extant), which had been promised to a music-seller at Zurich, but which Caspar had disposed of elsewhere. Under these unfavorable circumstances, it was not wonderful that every excrescence of a nature strong, but prone to malformation, should become exaggerated, until at last they absorbed all life and force from its healthier parts—

that a generous disregard of money should be exchanged for a self-tormenting and grasping avarice—that the same suspiciousness, which made him in Vienna choose an open place for his residences, to escape from the pilferings of meaner musicians, in particular, of one A. G. (Abbé Gelinek ?) who used to settle themselves close in his neighborhood, for the purpose of stealing what they could from his improvisations—should at last drive him to an extreme of unreasonable harshness.”

“One more anecdote of Beethoven’s pianoforte-playing which can be drawn from these interesting ‘Notizen,’ may be placed here by way of relief:—

“When Steibelt came with his great celebrity, from Paris to Vienna, several of Beethoven’s friends were afraid that the reputation of the latter might be injured. Steibelt did not call upon him—they met, for the first time, at a party given by Count Fries, where Beethoven introduced his new trio in B flat, for pianoforte, clarinet, and violoncello (op. 11.) The performer has no peculiar opportunity for display in this piece. Steibelt listened to it with a sort of condescension, paid Beethoven a few compliments, and thought himself sure of his victory. He played a quintett of his own composition, extemporized, and produced much effect by his *tremolando* passages, which were then quite novel. Beethoven could not be induced to play any more. A week afterwards Count Fries gave another concert. On this occasion Steibelt played a quintett with great success, and a brilliant fantasia, which he had evidently *got up*—on the same theme (*Priach’ impegno*) on which the variations in Beethoven’s trio are written. This provoked the admirers of Beethoven and the master himself: they insisted on his sitting down to improvise. He went to the instrument in his usual, I may say, uncouth manner, as if he was pushed there, and, as he went by, took up the violoncello part of Steibelt’s quintett, laid it (purposely ?) upside down on the desk, and, with one finger, strummed a theme out of the first bars. As he went on he became so enraged and excited in his improvisation that Steibelt left the room before Beethoven had done—never would meet him again, and made it a condition that any one wishing for his company should not invite Beethoven.”—pp. 81, 82.

“But enough of these illustrations; though with such a treasury of precious material before us, it is far easier for us to speak of the peculiarities and faults of the man—of his lonely household, and his gloomy death-bed, haunted by spectres of poverty and ruin which his own distempered fancy had conjured up—than to attempt, however imperfectly, to characterize the works which have placed him above all his contemporaries. But Beethoven’s pianoforte compositions are above parallel, and even to their technical analysis must be

brought something of the spirit in which they were composed. What this spirit was may partly be divined from his own confessions, as recorded in the charming but wild letters of Bettine Brentano to Goethe."

"When I open my eyes (said Beethoven) I cannot choose but sigh; for what I behold is at enmity with my faith, and I am forced to despise the world, which has no conception that music is a higher revelation than all their wisdom and philosophy; it is the wine which inspires new creations; and I am the Bacchus that crushes out this noble juice for mankind, and makes their spirits drunk; and when they are sobered again, then you see what a world of things they have fished up to bring back with them to *dry land* again. I have no friend: I must needs live alone with myself, but I well know that God is nearer me in my art than others: I commune with him without fear: evermore have I acknowledged and understood him: and I am not fearful concerning my music—no evil fate can befall it: and he to whom it is become intelligible must become free from all the paltriness that the others drag about with them."

"Visionary as may this '*raptus*' seem, it nevertheless contains the true philosophy of genius in its highest manifestation." Beethoven says of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, that *the sacred art ought never to be degraded to the foolery of so scandalous a subject*; and he thoroughly acted up to this judgment in choosing the subject of his one opera, *Fidelio*.

"Beethoven's great thoughts are not in any wise dependent upon the great means employed in their utterance. The critic who, in speaking of Michael Angelo's sketch of 'Cleopatra,' begged especial attention to the style 'in which that twisted lock is wound about the shoulders,' adding, 'it is but a plait of woman's hair, yet lies with an immensity of coil which might beseem a serpent on the neck of the Medusa,' used a figure admirably suited to many of our poet's works—admirably illustrative of his whole style of handling. And it is the constant presence of this grasp and greatness, that has led some of Beethoven's eulogists to speak of him as merely stern, dark, and gloomy—as if there were not some score of his *scherzi* laughing such an one-sided character in the face; as if he had not, in the *finale* to the second Razumouffsky quartett, given playfulness and joy an utterance, the ecstasy of which was never exceeded by Rossini or Auber himself;—as if the slow movement of the first of the three Zurich sonatas (about which their composer and his brother Caspar fought) did not remain as an evidence of utter mastery over the finest details of grace and ornament; and the *finale* to

the already-cited Waldstein Sonata, and the whole Sonata *pastorale* (op. 28) did not exist to remind them that for such pictures also as are conveyed by a fresh and sunny and peaceful melody, their rugged and incomparable storm-painter has not left his peer behind him. Even in Beethoven's latest compositions, by some charged with a super-subtlety fatal to their excellences, (as if it followed that the labyrinth is impassable because the clue is not ready to every hand) there is always some outbreak of fancy, as felicitously simple, as startling by its originality, as familiar by its truth, as the happiest couplet in Shakspeare. With ourselves, the genuine success which has attended the recent performances of the Choral Symphony, so long considered in England a chaotic puzzle, reasonably encourages the anticipation of that time when even the elaborate Sonata, No. 106, with its tremendous fugued *finale*, will be as distinctly understood, if not as frequently played, as the three first Sonats (dedicated to Haydn) or the *pastorale*, or the Lichnowsky Sonata, already renowned for the exquisite clearness of their beauty."

[To be continued.]

THE CADENZA.

BY E. T. A. HOFFMANN.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN FOR THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.]

[Continued from page 284.]

In the afternoon, we mounted very solemnly and heavily, the stairs that led to their apartments; we both felt as though we had to encounter an adventure which was beyond our powers. My uncle, well prepared for the occasion, said many good things upon the art, which neither himself nor either of us others understood; while I had twice burnt my tongue with the scalding chocolate, yet smiled, a second Scævola, in stoical equanimity, at the furious pain. At last Lauretta said she would give us a song. Teresina took the guitar, tuned it, and gave some full chords. I had never heard the instrument before; and its peculiar, mysterious sound struck my imagination most wonderfully. Lauretta began a tone *piano-pianissimo*, swelling it to *fortissimo*, and then suddenly breaking off into a running figure through one and a half octaves. I still remember the words of the beginning, *Sento l'amica speme*. I was out of my

self; I had had no conception of that. But when Lauretta rose freer and bolder on the wings of song; when, more brightly sparkling, the brilliant tones played around me; music, that had lain so long dormant and lifeless within me, awoke, and rose into a bright and splendid flame. O! I had heard music for the first time in my life.

When she had finished, both sisters together sang those serious and deep duettos by the Abbaté Steffani. Teresina's full and celestially pure Alto voice touched my very soul. I could not repress my emotion; the tears gushed from my eyes. My uncle coughed, glancing disapprovingly at me, but in vain: I was indeed out of myself. The sisters seemed to be pleased, they inquired about my musical studies. I was ashamed of what I had been doing in music hitherto, and exclaimed, emboldened by my enthusiasm, that but now, for the first time in my life, I had heard real music. "Il bon fanciullo," lisped Lauretta very sweetly. When I came home, I took, in a sort of fury, all the toccatas and fugues, which I had put together, nay, even forty-five variations on a canon, which the organist had composed and presented me in a neat copy, and threw them all into the fire, laughing scornfully at the smoking and crackling of the double counterpoint. After that, I sat down at the instrument, trying first to imitate the tones of the guitar; then, to play the melodies which the sisters had sung; nay, at last, even to sing them. "Don't squeal so dreadfully, but go to your bed and to sleep," cried my uncle at midnight, extinguishing both my lights. He had been awaked by my singing. I was obliged to obey. My dreams taught me the secret of singing—so I imagined—for I sang splendidly "*sento l'amica speme*."

For the next morning, my uncle had convoked every body that could in any way draw a bow or blow a pipe, for a rehearsal. He proudly meant to show how splendid our music was; but it turned out very unfortunately. Lauretta gave out a grand scena; but in the very first *recitativo*, all the instruments were in confusion: nobody had any idea of an accompaniment. Lauretta scolded, and cried of anger and impatience. The organist was at the piano, and she assailed him in particular with bitter reproaches. He rose and went out of doors in silent obstinacy. The town musician, incensed by an *Asino maledetto*, which Lauretta had dealt upon him, had taken his violin under his arm, and put on his hat in defiance. He too moved towards the door; and his men, putting their bows be-

tween the strings, and screwing off their mouth-pieces, followed. The amateurs alone remained, looking embarrassedly round; and the excise-gatherer exclaimed tragically, "O God, how it affects me!"

All my diffidence had left me; I ran after the town musician, entreating him, imploring him, to return; nay, even promising him six new minuets with double trio, for the public ball. I succeeded in appeasing him. He returned to his stand, his men following, and the orchestra was again completed, except that the organist was missing. He walked slowly along the market place; no beckoning nor calling brought him back. Teresina had all the while looked on with half stifled tittering; Lauretta's anger had vanished on seeing my ardor. She praised me beyond measure, and asked me whether I played the pianoforte; and before I had time to consider, I was seated in the place of the organist, with the score before me. I had never accompanied the voice, or led an orchestra. But Teresina sat down by me, giving me the time of each movement; Lauretta gave me one encouraging *bravo* after another; the orchestra followed my direction, and it went very well. At the second rehearsal, every thing was understood; and the effect of the sisters' singing upon the audience in the concert itself was indescribable. Being engaged to sing in the concerts and upon the stage, at the festivals which were intended in the capital on the sovereign's return, and having no particular object in view until that time, they resolved to stay in our town; and thus they gave a few more concerts. The admiration of the public rose to ecstasy; only old Meibel took considerably a pinch of snuff from her porcelain pug-dog, and said that such an impertinent bawling could not be called singing; the singing must be done *dolce*. The organist did not show himself any more, and I did not miss him. I was the happiest man under the sun.

I was all day with the sisters, accompanying them, and copying the parts from the scores for use in the capital. Lauretta was my beau-ideal: I bore very patiently all her ill humor, her immoderate impetuosity, and her teasing me at the pianoforte; for was it not she, and she alone, that had introduced me to genuine music? I began to study Italian, and to attempt the composition of canzonettas; and I felt as in heaven, when Lauretta sung my composition and praised it! It often appeared to me as though I had not thought and composed it, but that Lauretta's singing alone created the

thoughts. As to Teresina, I could not make any thing of her: she sang but seldom, and appeared not to care much for any thing I did; nay, sometimes even to ridicule me in secret.

(*To be continued.*)

MUSIC IN BOSTON.

SUMMER SEASON.

Though the summer is not the season for musical operations in Boston, yet several things have transpired, which are of very considerable interest in relation to the art. Among these are the annual meeting of the Musical Convention; that of the Boston Academy of Music, and its Annual Report; and a few Concerts.

THE MUSICAL CONVENTION. We trust this body is destined to become a most important engine in the cultivation of the art throughout the country; for we certainly have ground for the most encouraging hopes, when the profession and those who are engaged in teaching the art, come forward zealously and judiciously to unite in the common object of its advancement.

The Musical Convention had its origin in a small class of teachers of vocal music, which was collected by an advertisement of the Boston Academy of Music, for the purpose of attending a course of practical lectures from Messrs. Mason and Webb, its professors, on the Pestalozzian method of teaching the elements of vocal music. This method was then new in this country; and the Academy's Manual, compiled by Mr. Mason from the German works of Nägeli and Pfeiffer, had just made its appearance, and was made the basis of instruction and of these lectures. The class has continued to meet from year to year, gradually augmented in numbers and extended in purpose. For the last two or three years Mr Webb has given a course of lectures on Harmony and Thorough Bass. In the year 1835, the members of the class formed themselves into a separate organization, denominated the Musical Convention, for the discussion of musical questions of general interest, at hours when they were not occupied with the lectures. This Convention grew in interest and importance; till, in 1838, it afforded a strong additional inducement to many, and to some the principal one, for assembling at that time. The spirit manifested at that meeting was correctly described this

year by Mr. Mason, as evincing that they had outgrown their childhood, and began to feel the necessity of becoming independent, of freeing themselves from the guardianship of the Boston Academy of Music, and of pursuing the common object, the improvement of the art among us, in coöperation with it. This spirit gave rise to the appointment of a Committee, with instructions to draft a Constitution for the Convention, and to report it to the annual meeting in 1839. The Convention had been from the first wholly independent of the Academy, the professors being enrolled and acting only as members of it: and the appointment of this Committee gave assurance of its permanence in the promotion of the cause in which it was engaged. Nothing more transpired at the meeting of 1838, which requires present notice. The number of members had increased to about one hundred; and all the eastern, and several of the middle, southern, and western states were represented.

The number present this year, 1839, was one hundred and ninety-five, and they were collected from a still wider extent of country.

The Convention was organized on the 1st of August, the day to which it had adjourned; but owing to the absence of the chairman of the Committee to report a Constitution, that document was not reported for several days. This was to be regretted; for the Constitution took a very wide and high aim in relation to the art, extended over the whole field, and was calculated for the whole country; establishing a truly national Convention, and providing for all the interests of instruction, information and hearty coöperation. For the immediate adoption of a plan of this magnitude and extent, the Convention seemed not yet prepared; it presented so many new objects and interests, that some were startled; it required full explanation, careful deliberation, and thorough examination; and for this the time was too short. The debate on the motion to adopt the Constitution as a whole, was cut short before the subject had been fully digested; and the motion was lost. A new Committee was, however, immediately raised, with instructions to call a National Convention for the next year, and to revise and report the Constitution to that body. This, we think, was a wise course: the subject is now fully before those who are most interested in it; and next year they will undoubtedly come together in still greater numbers, prepared to act on the subject, and to establish themselves under some permanent organization, by adopting such a Constitution as they shall think best calculated to promote the interests of the art.

The debates on the Constitution limited the time for the discussion of the subjects presented for that purpose, by the Committee on business. - These were the following :

1. On the importance, and the best method, of diffusing musical knowledge. The former was admitted by all, in its widest sense. The means proposed were, Seminaries and Societies in all the states, connected with each other.

2. Is it advisable to encourage congregational singing in connection with the choir, in the present state of musical cultivation ? Though it was generally admitted that congregational singing was desirable in itself, yet many were opposed to it in the present state of things. The objections were, that the want of musical knowledge, and the lack of interest in the subject, in congregations generally, rendered the thing impracticable, without producing much discord and confusion. What appears to us to be the greatest obstacle, was not mentioned ; and this is, the character of the Church Music prevalent among us.

The Protestant Church stands related to the Roman Catholic very much in the same way in its music as in its religion. The Protestant religion appeals to the heart of man through his understanding ; the Catholic, through his imagination and feelings. So it is too with their music. The Catholics use but few words, many times repeated ; but in a dead language, understood by very few ; leaving it to the music to draw forth the feelings and raise the emotions of the congregation. The Protestants, on the other hand, place the chief power of their hymns and psalms in the words ; laboring to have the sentiments fully developed, not only poetically but rationally ; and then applying them to their simple, but sometimes substantial, and often noble strains. In short, while the Catholics melt in raptures under their *masses*, the Protestants kindle and exalt their devotional feelings by their *chorals*. It is not possible that the former should become congregational ; the latter may, from its simplicity. But the choral is not only greatly limited in the extent of its melody, seldom reaching beyond the octave ; but it also requires a steady, flowing movement, and a total absence of any thing abrupt or startling, both in the melody and the rhythm. The steps in the melody, from one tone to another, must be small ; and the rhythm must be even throughout. Old Hundred is a model of these chorals, of which hundreds may be found in the German Protestant Choral-Books ; but how few such are to be met with in

our Collections of Psalm and Hymn tunes, from first to last ; how many, on the contrary, that are directly opposed to this character, by their allegro time, by the bold steps of their melodies, and by their varying and broken rhythm.

3. Instrumental music, as an accompaniment, its use and its abuse. The subject was explained as applying in this case to church music only ; and the decision, so far as it was pronounced, was, that instruments were admissible only to support the voice.

4. Ought music to be introduced as a branch of general education in common schools ? This was unanimously decided in the affirmative.

These are all the subjects which were discussed. A series of popular lectures on musical subjects was delivered before the Convention. This was a new and very agreeable arrangement in the exercises, and will probably be extended hereafter, much to the promotion of the general objects of the meeting.

Before leaving this subject, we have a few words to say concerning the Class, to which Mr. Mason's language to the Convention, that it had outgrown its childhood, is equally applicable. The instructions given are chiefly the teaching of elementary singing by the Pestalozzian method, and the elements of Thorough Bass ; the former occupying three fourths of the time, and the latter but one fourth. This proportion ought to be reversed. The Academy's Manual explains the method of teaching elementary singing very much in detail, and a few visits to a school where the method is in operation, or a few lectures from the Academy's Professors, ought to be enough to enable any intelligent man, who has studied singing, to qualify himself, with the use of the Manual, to teach it. On the other hand, instruction in Harmony and Thorough Bass can nowhere be obtained, by most of our country teachers, except at these meetings ; and yet it is of the greatest importance to the general cultivation of music and musical taste, that they should acquire as much of such knowledge as possible. Could such information become common with this class of men, much of the trash that is now sold through the country as music would disappear ; and many of the pieces which are now constantly published in the best books we have, would no longer be sought for or wanted. The harmony and counterpoint of all our church music could be placed on a much better basis, and be made to assume a much higher character.